

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2006 – 2016

# CHAPTER 9 TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS IN THE KING'S CROSS TO FINSBURY PARK SWATHE

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Islington Council and London Development Agency have identified the corridor between King's Cross to Finsbury Park as a key regeneration swathe. All of the wards in the swathe fall within the top 10% of the most deprived wards in the UK (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000).
- 1.2 The swathe is anchored at the each end by the public transport interchanges at King's Cross-St Pancras and Finsbury Park. King's Cross has been identified in the London Plan as an 'Opportunity Area' on the basis that it is an area in need of regeneration and is capable of accommodating substantial new jobs and homes. The swathe contains a number of regeneration 'catalyst projects' such as the Arsenal Football Club developments, which are part of the 'Area of Intensification', identified in the London Plan. It is highly likely that the swathe will accommodate many of the 18,000 extra homes in Islington proposed by the London Plan.
- 1.3 Transport improvements will be needed in this swathe to unlock and complement regeneration. These improvements will contribute to environmental and accessibility improvements throughout the area. These transport improvements will ensure that the developments in the swathe provide benefits to the local community.

### 2.0 King's Cross

- 2.1 The main focus for the future of King's Cross is on the major new land use development proposed for the King's Cross railway lands site (known as 'King's Cross Central'). This site will be developed around the international rail terminal of King's Cross-St Pancras once construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) and new station are completed in 2007.
- 2.2 King's Cross-St Pancras is very well served by public transport already and is one of London's busiest rail interchanges. It is served by the Victoria, Northern, Piccadilly, Metropolitan, Circle Hammersmith & City Underground lines. There are also a large number of bus routes serving a wide variety of destinations locally and the West End and City. However, as a result of additional passengers from the CTRL and King's Cross Central, there will be a need for substantially enhanced public transport services and infrastructure.

#### Channel Tunnel Rail Link

- 2.3 A new high-speed rail line from St Pancras to the Channel Tunnel is under construction. There will be new international stations at St Pancras, Stratford and Ebbsfleet. The new line will be open in 2007 and will significantly reduce journey times to European destinations and provide capacity for more international services. The new line will also allow domestic high-speed services from Kent to St Pancras and provide a fast link to Stratford to support London's bid for the 2012 Olympics.
- 2.4 A new Thameslink Station is being constructed at St Pancras to provide improved interchange between international, national and Underground services. However, the longer-term future of the existing King's Cross Pentonville Road Station is uncertain. If the proposed Thameslink 2000 project progresses, this station would close and some local residents and employees would have longer distances to walk to access Thameslink services.

Thameslink 2000 is discussed later in this chapter

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- 2.5 King's Cross St Pancras is one of London's busiest stations, and the Underground Station is in need of increased interchange capacity, modernisation, accessibility improvements and safety measures to address recommendations from the Fennell report resulting from the King's Cross fire. The introduction of CTRL international and domestic services in 2007 will increase capacity pressures at the King's Cross-St Pancras Underground station and on tube services.
- 2.6 At the planning stage of CTRL, it was envisaged that there would be additional public transport capacity at King's Cross St Pancras. Key infrastructure projects to relieve congestion at King's Cross St Pancras include Thameslink 2000, Cross River Tram, King's Cross Western and Northern Underground Ticket Halls, King's Cross Western Concourse and King's Cross Platform Y. The Western Underground Ticket Hall is proceeding and is due for completion in 2006. The new ticket hall will help to relieve congestion in the existing ticket hall and passageways by providing a new fully accessible direct access from St Pancras Station to the Metropolitan, Circle and Hammersmith & City lines.
- 2.7 The Northern Ticket Hall development will provide further capacity to prevent overcrowding of the Underground Station and provide step-free access to the remaining deep-level lines. The government recently approved funding for the Northern Ticket Hall and works will be complete by 2012. The completion of this hall is necessary to prevent overcrowding from the growth in the area from CTRL passengers and development of the King's Cross Railway Lands Site and regeneration of the wider area.
- 2.8 Proposals for the King's Cross western concourse, mainline station and Platform Y are now being developed but the timescales and funding commitments for these elements remain uncertain.

### King's Cross Central

- 2.9 King's Cross has been identified in the London Plan as an 'Opportunity Area' on the basis that it is an area in need of regeneration and is capable of accommodating substantial new jobs and homes. In addition, Islington's UDP highlights King's Cross as a priority area for regeneration. The King's Cross Central development as currently proposed would be the second largest new commercial development in London after Canary Wharf and is likely to employ approximately 80,000 people and be home to another 10,000.
- 2.10 Given the scale of King's Cross Central it is vital that the transport and environmental effects of the development are addressed and mitigated to protect Islington's residents and businesses. The council wishes to ensure that the proposed development does not lead to an unacceptable increase in vehicular traffic on local roads. In addition, the public transport infrastructure in the area needs to be properly upgraded to accommodate the large increase in additional passengers from both King's Cross Central and from the CTRL. It is also important that the wider regeneration benefits of King's Cross Central are secured to provide a catalyst to regenerate adjoining areas in Islington.
- 2.11 The planning application for the King's Cross Central development was submitted in May 2004, and discussions between TfL, GLA and Islington and Camden Councils are ongoing with a view to determining the application in the first half of 2005.
- 2.12 The transport priorities in this process are:
- to ensure that the development conforms with the planning brief for the site (developed jointly by Camden and Islington) and delivers the scale and quality of development identified

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- to ensure that the development is integrated fully with surrounding areas (both in Islington and Camden) in terms of both physical links and transport links
- to ensure that public transport is not adversely impacted by the development
- to ensure that the regeneration benefits of the King's Cross development are maximised in the surrounding areas

### 2.13 More specifically:

- to ensure that sufficient transport investment is secured from the key agencies and the developer to ensure efficient public transport and highway network operation following the implementation of King's Cross Central
- to ensure that private car use associated with the development is minimised, through parking control and travel plan agreements with occupiers. In addition, local residents in adjoining areas should be protected from evening and weekend parking overspill, and from increased traffic along residential roads. To achieve this additional parking controls and traffic calming measures may be needed
- to maximise regeneration and integration with surrounding areas through the introduction of new or re-routed bus services linking Islington and Camden to the site. Buses that currently terminate at the south end of the site could be extended to the north of the site and beyond. New routes under consideration include an new orbital route linking Camden, King's Cross Central, Highbury and Dalston (IH Route). In addition, a bus route is being examined to fill the long-standing gap linking King's Cross and Waterloo. The route could also serve the high demand corridor of Finsbury Park, Nags Head and York Way
- to secure new highly accessible walking and cycling routes through the development, as well as upgrading existing routes to the area including upgrading footways and road surfaces, reducing street clutter, introducing pedestrian wayfinding, additional cycle lanes, controlled crossings, improved lighting, secure cycle storage facilities, etc
- to ensure good streetscape quality migrates to surrounding areas of Camden and Islington
- to investigate the potential contribution of a re-opened York Road Station to the King's Cross Central transport strategy and to public transport accessibility in Islington

### 2.14 In addition, the council would seek other improvements either directly (through the S.106 process) or indirectly following completion of the King's Cross development. These include

- improvements to King's Cross mainline and Underground station to accommodate additional passengers from CTRL and King's Cross Central
- expansion of London Buses and community bus services and facilities to serve the King's Cross Central site and adjacent areas of Islington
- expansion of existing 20mph zone areas around King's Cross with accompanying integral freight management and lorry ban strategy
- restoration of the historical street pattern in the 10 Estates area, linking to the King's Cross Central development
- investigation of potential air quality initiatives and Clear Zones in the area

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- expansion and further development of wayfinding and other pedestrian signage already in the area, including multi-lingual assistance in the vicinity of King's Cross
- improvement of street environments around King's Cross Central site, including public art, tree and other planting and street furniture
- further expansion of the London City Car Club, with additional vehicles based on the King's Cross Central site
- improvement of leisure cycling and pedestrian facilities along the Regent's Canal (including addressing existing pedestrian-cycle conflicts on the towpath)
- improvements for access to public transport from the large number of social housing estates including 10 Estates, Bemerton, Market and Maiden Lane.

2.15 Discussions with the developers and other key agencies are ongoing to ensure that these priorities are addressed in the planning application.

### Thameslink 2000

2.16 The Thameslink 2000 project proposes to significantly upgrade the existing heavily overcrowded Thameslink services through Central London and to expand the network of services. Additional capacity and lengthening of platforms would mean that longer trains could operate at frequencies of up to 24 trains an hour over the central section (the current frequency is only eight trains an hour). In addition new frequent cross-London services could be introduced from places such as Cambridge, Peterborough, Dartford, Eastbourne and Finsbury Park. Trains would also connect with Underground and mainline services at King's Cross, Farringdon, Blackfriars and London Bridge.

2.17 Overall, Thameslink 2000 would provide significant benefits to Islington and could help to reduce congestion on some Underground lines and stations. In addition Thameslink 2000 would assist with the dispersal of passengers from the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at St Pancras. However, the council has a number of concerns about these proposals including:

- the Thameslink Moorgate branch will close and passengers travelling to Moorgate would have to interchange onto the Underground at Farringdon
- lack of coordination between the Thameslink 2000 and Crossrail projects could result in two separate stations being built adjacent to each other with poor access between services
- the existing King's Cross Thameslink station on Pentonville Road would close and the additional distance to the replacement station at St Pancras will inconvenience local residents and employees

2.18 The next step for Thameslink 2000 is a renewed public inquiry, which is scheduled for September 2005. A decision on the scheme could be reached by the end of 2005 and construction could begin in 2007. On this basis, the estimated date of completion of the project is currently 2012.

### Cross River Tram

2.19 The proposed Cross River Tram will provide links from the south from Peckham and Elephant & Castle to the West End and Euston, terminating at King's Cross. Through the central section trams could operate a service of 24 trams per hour.

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- 2.20 Islington Council is concerned that proposals to terminate the Tram at King's Cross will represent a significant lost opportunity, given the potential transport impact of the King's Cross development and the desire to improve links between the Kings Cross Central area and regeneration areas.
- 2.21 The Tram should be extended to serve key regeneration areas including the King's Cross-Finsbury Park swathe including the Bemerton Estate, Caledonian Road, 10 Estates and the Arsenal/Holloway area. Such an extension would also serve the busy retail centres of Nag's Head and Finsbury Park and provide a direct link to Arsenal's new 60,000 capacity stadium. This corridor has very low car ownership levels and high public transport demand, with very high bus usage along many sections of the corridor. Current bus links are indirect and often require at least one change to travel between these destinations. The population density on the corridor is very high and nearly 100,000 people would be within 500m of the tram service.

### 3.0 Arsenal and Holloway

- 3.1 The London Plan has identified Arsenal and Holloway as 'Areas of Intensification' where more intense development is encouraged for employment and residential land uses.
- 3.2 At the heart of the area is the new Arsenal Football Stadium in Ashburton Grove, which will provide the Arsenal Football Club with a new 60,000 seat capacity stadium from the beginning of the 2006 season. In addition, other Arsenal related developments are proposed in Queensland Road, Hornsey Street, Lough Road and at the existing Highbury Stadium. These combined Arsenal developments when completed in 2008 will generate 1800 jobs and 2407 residential units.
- 3.3 An overall package of £60m in community benefits is being delivered by the Arsenal projects, which will offset any adverse impacts of the development. Included within this package of measures is a new state-of-the-art waste transfer station for North London that became operational in August 2004. In addition, there will be significant investment in local transport infrastructure to assist with the arrival and dispersal of spectators. Proposed measures include
- capacity improvements to Holloway Road Station to enable the station to be used by an increased number of passengers during match days
  - contribution towards TfL's interchange improvements for Finsbury Park Station
  - modernisation of Drayton Park Station
  - development of a travel plan to ensure that effective use is made of the available transport in local area
  - streetscape, pedestrian and lighting improvements in the vicinity of the new stadium
  - an extensive match day parking scheme with more restrictive parking controls to be implemented around the stadium
  - environmental traffic management schemes for Lough Road, Mackenzie Road, Benwell Road and Hillmarton Road
  - junction improvement works at Holloway Road/Hornsey Street and Caledonian Road/Hillmarton Road
  - provision of new access routes and bridges around the stadium area providing improved links through the site between surrounding areas

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- 3.4 The Arsenal developments will act as a catalyst for further regeneration projects around the Holloway Road area and provide a further stimulus for enhancements to the Nag's Head town centre. As a result, it will be necessary to make additional investment in local transport to ensure that overcrowding does not worsen on local transport infrastructure. Our priorities for investment include
- additional bus services to meet growing demand on radial corridors into West End and City serving Holloway Road and Highbury Grove
  - new bus services connecting local centres and providing access to areas with poor public transport (e.g. Drayton Park)
  - removal of the A503 gyratory system and public realm improvements in the local area
  - completion of a project to link all traffic signals on the A1 to provide effective traffic management that minimises delays to general traffic and buses
  - upgrade and modernisation of Finsbury Park Station to include capacity improvements, modernisation and wheelchair access to mainline and Underground platforms
  - upgrade and modernisation of Highbury & Islington Station including capacity improvements and wheelchair access to mainline and Underground platforms
  - introduction of evening and weekend services on WAGN Finsbury Park to Moorgate branch line
  - measures to address over-crowding on North London Line services at peak times
  - implementation of Public/Private Partnership (PPP) enhancements to Underground services on Piccadilly and Victoria Lines
- 3.5 Discussions with the developers and other key agencies are ongoing to ensure that these priorities are addressed in planning applications submitted.

## 4.0 Finsbury Park

- 4.1 Finsbury Park Station serves the Tollington and Finsbury Park wards, both identified in the London Plan as an 'Area for Regeneration'. Finsbury Park is also adjacent to the Arsenal/Holloway 'Area for Intensification' ear-marked for higher density development in the London Plan. In the council's Unitary Development Plan, a number of key sites in Finsbury Park are identified for development. However, there has been slow progress in securing development that meets the council's planning aspirations. At the centre of Finsbury Park is the large transport interchange at Finsbury Park Station. Each day 85,000 people use Finsbury Park Station, making it the busiest multi-modal interchange in north London.
- 4.2 The passenger environment at Finsbury Park Station is poor and the interchange between Underground, train and bus services is confusing and indirect. Sections of the station also suffer from over-crowding at peak times, and the station does not have lifts to accommodate people with mobility difficulties. These problems will be exacerbated by a further increase in mainline and Underground passengers due to completion of the nearby Arsenal developments in Ashburton Grove and Highbury, due for completion in 2006 and 2008 respectively.
- 4.3 Transport for London is expecting to complete a significant interchange scheme for the station by the end of 2006 to improve the environment for buses, cyclists, and pedestrians. However, the council is

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concerned that there are no firm proposals by Network Rail or the train operator to upgrade and modernise those parts of the station that are within their control.

- 4.4 Research by Islington Council has identified a large parcel of potential redevelopment sites surrounding the station. As a result, preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for this area is seen as the best way forward to facilitate a coordinated approach to development that meets the needs of the local community as well as public transport users. The AAP will investigate possible options for remodeling sections of the station. Funding for the preparation of an AAP is currently being sought from the Finsbury Park Partnership, with other potential funding sources being considered. Area Action Plans will form part of Islington's Local Development Framework (LDF), due to replace the existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP) over the next three years.
- 4.5 There will be a need for a major upgrade and modernisation scheme for the whole station to address overcrowding and step-free access to platforms.

## 5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Substantial new investment in transport infrastructure and services is needed in the Kings Cross to Finsbury Park Swathe to unlock regeneration and redevelopment opportunities. However very little of this investment is committed to date and many key projects are suffering from substantial delays. The council will continue to make the case and lobby for this investment.

